

Cape Breton Highlands National Park

CAI
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Nova Scotia



Top: Pleasant Bay; bottom: Falls near Aspy River



Introducing a Park and an Idea
Canada covers half a continent, fronts on three oceans, and stretches from the extreme Arctic more than halfway to the equator. There is a great variety of land forms in this immense country, and Canada's national parks have been created to preserve important examples for you and for generations to come.
The National Parks Act of 1930 specifies that national parks are "dedicated to the people... for their benefit, education and enjoyment" and must remain "unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."
Cape Breton Highlands National Park, 367 square miles in area, forms part of a huge tableland rising over 1,700 feet above the sea in the northern section of Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. With its rugged Atlantic shoreline and mountainous background, the park is reminiscent of the coastal areas of Scotland.

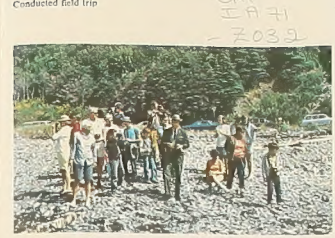
The Park Environment
Each national park has its own character, its unique story as a living, outdoor museum. Cape Breton Highlands' story is the drama of a mountainous landscape with bold headlands, numerous streams, lakes, and forests as well as treeless barrens. The park is home for a remarkable diversity of living things.

The Land: An Ancient Landscape
Fringed with a lower coastal plain, the Cape Breton Highlands are a northeastern extension of an old land surface found in parts of New England, the Eastern Townships of Quebec, and the Maritime provinces to the west. The plateau of western Newfoundland is probably part of the same upland.

In the park, this highland reaches an altitude of 1,747 feet, the highest point in Nova Scotia. Spectacular cliffs rise some 1,000 feet above the park's western shore, where the plateau comes almost directly to the sea. The eastern part slopes more gently, although a long east-facing cliff is found along a fault, or break in the earth's crust, extending along the North Aspy River Valley, and north beyond it.

Sireams have cut deeply into the plateau, producing the steep but rounded hills which, with their forest cover, make these valley areas so beautiful. In one place, the Cheticamp River has etched a 1,000-foot-deep valley. The park's geological history goes back at least a billion years. Sedimentary material such as sand, lime, mud, and gravel collected on the bottom of an ancient sea, and finally solidified into rock. Later, during a period of volcanic action, masses of molten igneous material crystallized to form granite and similar rock.

Perhaps 300 million years ago, more sedimentary material collected in shallow waters, estuaries, and river deltas to form conglomerate (a substance composed of



rocks of varying sizes), sandstone, and shale. Later, when parts of the sea evaporated, it left behind reddish beds with gypsum deposits.

In the park, the flat-bedded sedimentary rock of the earth's crust folded, cracked and was upended during the last 500 million years. Molten granite from below was forced upward through these cracks or faults, cooled, and now forms the hardest rock in the park.

Over the course of millions of years, rivers eroded the land to a flat plain. Again the landscape was altered when enormous pressures within the earth lifted the area to a large plateau. The Great Ice Age, which covered the whole of North America during the past million years, now began its work, scraping away soil, and leaving boulders and masses of glacial debris scattered across the landscape. The ice retreated, and once again streams are eroding and changing the face of the land.

The Plants: A Diversified Community
Much of the park is covered with a typical Acadian Forest, which includes balsam fir, white, black, and red spruce, white and yellow birch, sugar maple, elm, beech, ash, trembling and largetooth aspen, and balsam poplar.

Although evergreens predominate at the higher elevations, large areas of the park's central plateau are mostly devoid of trees. Seldom seen by the visitor, this interesting section is reminiscent of Labrador or other subarctic regions. Here are small ponds and lakes, muskeg, and broad areas of drier heath-barrens, in which reindeer lichen, sheep-laurel and many other subarctic plants grow. Spruce and other trees, which grow in the interior heath-bogs and along the bold coastal headlands, are stunted and twisted into bizarre shapes. The headlands are also the home of creeping and ground juniper, black crowberry, Scotch lovage, and other plants able to exist despite the wind and salt spray.

The Animals: Each Seeks Its Own Habitat
Some of the animals in the park have become accustomed to man and may be observed at fairly close range. How-

Cliffs at Corney Brook



nominal charge at the administration building, information centres, or from a park warden. Fishing regulations and up-to-date information can be obtained from information centres. Visitors can arrange deep-sea fishing trips with local fishermen.

Some Don'ts
National parks are selected areas set apart as nature sanctuaries and special care is taken to maintain them in their natural state. For this reason, all birds, animals, wildlife, trees, rocks, and fossils are to be left undisturbed. Even the wildflowers are not to be picked; they must be left for others to enjoy. Feeding, touching, or molesting wild animals is not permitted.
Please help protect your park for future enjoyment. It is part of your national heritage.
You may bring your dog or cat, but dogs must be kept on leash. Permits or vaccination certificates are not required.

Where To Stay
Camping brings you into the closest contact with the natural environment and the values for which the park was created. Camping facilities are provided at seven campgrounds, the largest of which are Broad Cove, Cheticamp, Black Brook, and Ingonish Beach.



ever, they are still wild, and should be viewed and photographed with caution.

About 21 species of mammals have been recorded in the park, including most of those found on the Nova Scotian mainland. Characteristic to the area are the lynx, Keen's bat, snowshoe hare, black bear, red fox, short-tailed weasel, red squirrel, and chipmunk. Beaver are well established in the park. Muskrat, flying squirrel, otter, mink, pine marten, and bobcats also inhabit the area.

Small herds of woodland caribou were flown into the park in 1968 and 1969. They joined the moose to bring the animal population of the park closer to its original state before the first European settlement.

So far, over 150 species of birds have been recorded in the park. However, the actual numbers are probably greater, and the park naturalist welcomes reports of sightings.

Cape Breton Highlands National Park is a good observation area for many species of seabirds. Gannets are frequently seen diving along the coast in summer, when great black-backed and herring gulls, common and Arctic terns, great cormorants, black guillemots, and common ravens nest along the coast. The ring-necked duck, common and red-breasted merganser, and common goldeneye breed in the park, and other types of ducks and geese are visitors during migration periods in spring and autumn.

Many shorebirds nest in Cape Breton Highlands Na-

tional Park, including the American woodcock, common snipe, spotted sand-piper, and greater yellowlegs. Even more birds, such as the black-bellied plover, ruddy turnstone, whimbrel, and white-rumped sandpiper set down during southward migrations from late July to November.

Spruce and ruffed grouse are common park residents, as are the bald eagle, red-tailed hawk, goshawk, and barred owl. But the park's specialty is its variety of small land birds, including the warbler, thrush, woodpecker, and finch. The area marks the southern limit in which many of these birds are at their most abundant. They include bay-breasted blackpoll, mourning, Tennessee and Blackburnian warbler, boreal chickadee, Lincoln's and fox sparrow, white-winged and red crossbill, pine siskin, and pine grosbeak.

There are a few non-poisonous snakes in the park, including the garter snake. Several salamanders, frogs, and the American toad also inhabit the area.

Eastern brook trout and its sea trout form can be taken from park waters and Atlantic salmon are caught in the Cheticamp River pools. Local fishermen often take visitors out for the increasingly popular sport of deep sea-fishing.

A Brief History
John Cabot probably landed in northern Cape Breton Island in 1497; the Cabot Trail that circles part of the

How To Get The Most Out Of Your Visit
To help you understand and appreciate the park's complex natural environment, you are urged to take advantage of the free interpretive program, conducted by a professional naturalist and his staff. It will provide you with an insight into how climate, sea, land formations, plants, and animals are interrelated, and make your stay more rewarding.
During the day there are conducted field trips: in the evening, informative talks are held, illustrated with slides or films. Self-guiding trails, exhibits, interpretive signs, and viewpoints also explain the park's natural features.
Information on the interpretive program is available from bulletin boards, information centres, and park staff.

Where To Get Information
Detailed information may be obtained at information centres located at the Ingonish Beach and Cheticamp entrances. Uniformed staff will answer questions, provide maps, outline travel routes, and refer visitors to various areas and facilities in the park. Special events are posted on bulletin boards.

Park wardens, though not primarily responsible for general information, will help visitors whenever possible. Additional information on Cape Breton Highlands is available from the Superintendent, Cape Breton Highlands National Park, Ingonish Beach, Nova Scotia. For information on other national parks, write the Director, National and Historic Parks Branch, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Ottawa.

Daily fees vary and depend on whether the site is serviced or unserviced. Camping space is allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, and the maximum allowable stay is two weeks. Campgrounds open about May 20 and close about October 15, depending on the weather.

It is not permissible to camp outside established campgrounds, although visitors on overnight trail trips may camp en route, provided they register with a park warden before and after each trip, and obtain a campfire permit.

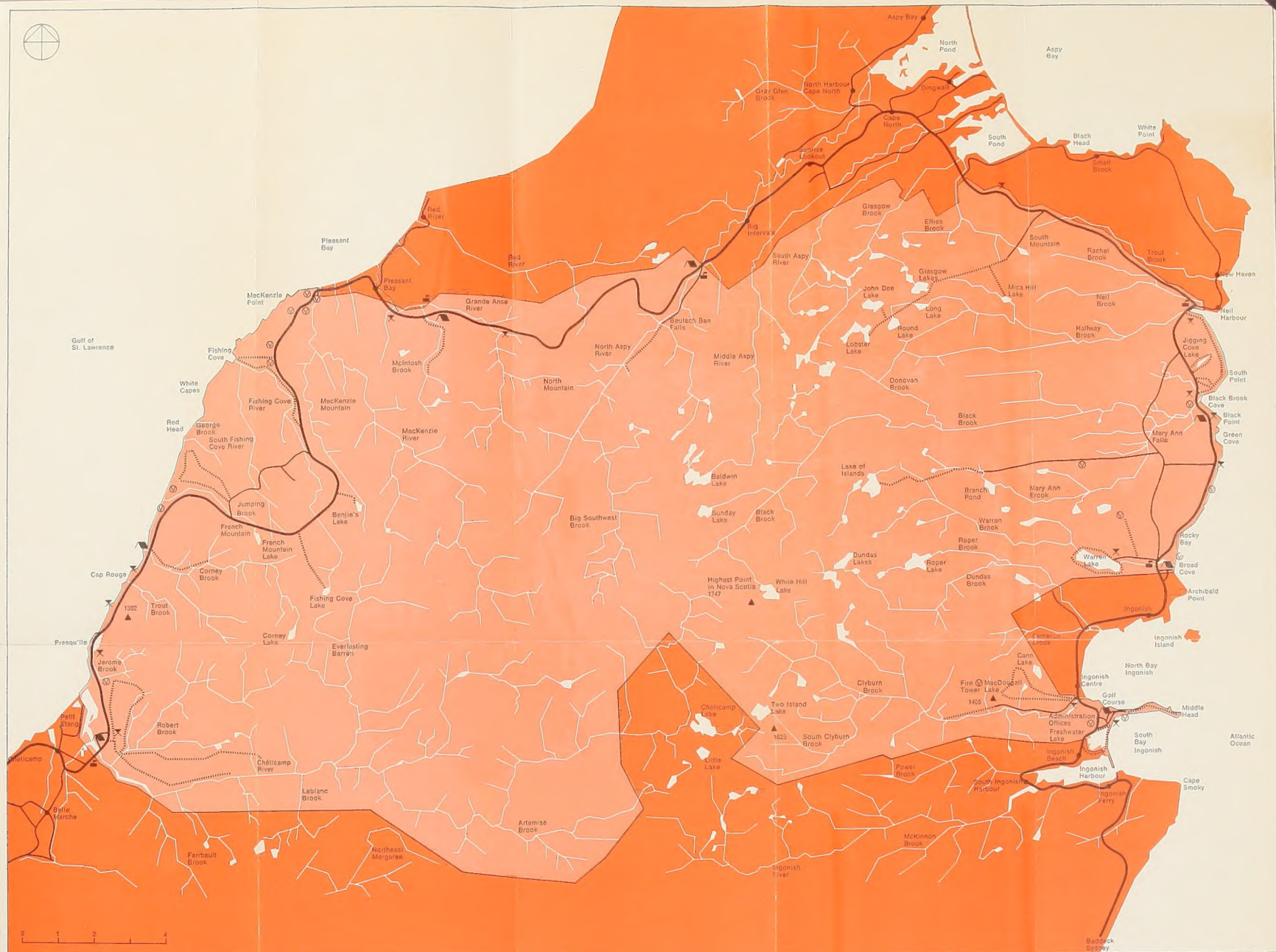
A variety of other accommodation and visitor services is available in villages on the Cabot Trail, just outside the park. Details are available at the park information centres.

In addition, the park offers a variety of other visitor facilities, including an 18-hole golf course and a half-mile-long supervised ocean beach.

Fires
Campfires may be set only in fireplaces provided for this purpose, or in outdoor stoves. Barbecues may be used only in campgrounds or in picnic areas, and all coals must be dumped into existing park fireplaces. Fire permits must be obtained from a park warden for open fires during trail travel.
Anyone finding an unattended fire should try to extinguish it, or, if beyond his control, report it at once to the nearest park employee.

Issued under authority of
Hon. Jean Charest, P.C., M.P.,
Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
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Cape Breton Highlands National Park

- Highway (Cabot Trail)
- - - Secondary Road
- Walking or Hiking Trail
- Lake, River, Creek
- ▲ Mountain
- Warden's Cabin
- ✕ Picnic Area
- Campground
- Viewpoint

